



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

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August 27, 2014

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

Cynthia A. Harding

SUBJECT: **OUTREACH PLAN FOR EXPANDED BLOOD LEAD SCREENING IN
THE COMMUNITIES NEAR EXIDE**

Since April, the Department of Public Health (DPH) has been conducting free blood-lead screening to residents in the communities of Commerce, Maywood, Huntington Park and East Los Angeles. The potential sources of lead exposure in these communities are varied, and typically warrant blood-lead screening for children ages 1 and 2. However, the presence of the Exide Technologies facility in Vernon represents an added source of exposure upon which the current screening offered to all residents in the area is based.

While we observed solid participation initially in this effort, there has recently been a somewhat slowed participation from the community. Last week the *Los Angeles Times* reported County officials (DPH) and health experts as saying the blood-lead testing had not drawn enough participants to reach any definitive conclusions. Below we summarize what DPH is doing to re-invigorate the awareness and benefits of blood-lead screening, and to increase participation among community residents.

DPH revised the flyer announcing the availability of free blood testing, and will shortly redistribute the flyer to approximately 35,000 households, workers, and members of the associated school communities. The flyer narrative has been modified to make clear that in addition to normal sources of lead exposure, these communities are also potentially exposed to airborne lead emissions from the Exide facility. Copies of the revised flyer will be given to community leaders, including through the assistance of Monsignor John Moretta and the Los Angeles Archdiocese for posting and distribution to church parishioners.

DPH Public Health Nurses will also be conducting targeted outreach in the area, educating community members about the benefits of blood-lead screening in this area and providing laboratory forms to interested residents so that they can get screened at their convenience.

We are contacting local school superintendents, principals, and administrators in all public and private daycare centers; preschools; and elementary, middle, and high schools within a 3-mile radius of Exide. We will distribute flyers and informational packets and offer live educational programs to the school communities regarding the health benefits of expanded lead testing in these communities. We will emphasize the heightened level of uncertainty regarding lead exposure in these communities due to contamination by Exide, and the vulnerability of young children to lead exposure.

DPH staff is also following up with individuals who have already received laboratory slips from DPH, but have yet to visit the laboratory for testing. We will provide information and answer any questions about the testing, including on the location of the laboratories and their hours of operation. DPH will also provide duplicate laboratory slips, if needed.

DPH will formulate an agreement with mobile laboratory vendors to facilitate blood sample collection, and to institute a schedule of convenient dates to facilitate community participation at convenient locations, such as churches and schools. DPH will discuss the most appropriate locations with church and school district leaders.

Finally, we are extending the free screening period by several months to at least through the end of November.

The above measures are being taken in consultation with community leaders and agencies with an interest in the blood-lead screening effort.

We will keep you informed of any significant developments. In the meantime, if you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

JEF:cr

cc: Chief Executive Officer
Acting County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors